



ONE of Feedback's American correspondents belongs to an association of translators. These are people who tend to be picky about words and to consult dictionaries frequently. A member recently complained on the group's email discussion list about an advertisement for a house which mentioned a dining room decorated with "wayne's coating". A check with Google – always useful for measuring the pervasiveness of ignorance – came up with about 50 hits for this mystery trick of the interior decorating trade, one for a company offering "faux wayne's coating".

But this was nothing compared to the number of firms offering furniture and fixtures made of "rod iron". Our correspondent points out that both Wayne and Rod seem to be confined to American websites. Any readers from outside the US who have not yet understood should try reading this aloud in a variety of American accents. What hath God rod?

COMPOSING witty error messages has long been one of the ways in which geeks try to show a human side. Where geeks work under the thumb of marketers, these tend to get suppressed. But Greenpeace has turned the notorious "Error 404 – page not found" response from its website to its marketing advantage.

Bearing a fetching image of a dodo, the error message notes that the page

Newspaper adverts for the Kettler Crosstrainer proclaim that "It makes exercise effortless". And the point would be...?

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you asked for "may be extinct, like many whales, chimpanzees and gorillas in the wild could be without your help; the page may have moved, like many Pacific Islanders will have to do...due to global warming..." and so forth. You can read the rest of it at www.greenpeace.org/whatever.

ON THE other hand, geeks are also responsible for those questions that can lead to a deterioration in the normally amicable relationship enjoyed by computers and their owners. Alistair Anderson's Mac asked him, for example: "Would you like to make PDF files open with Acrobat Reader 5.0 instead of Acrobat Reader 5.0?" Yes. No. Or "mu", as the Zen master user would have it.

AND then there are product claims – invariably blamed on what geeks call the market-droids. James Bullock received an email advertising RealPlayer 10, which told him that its many exciting features included the ability to "pause, rewind and fast-forward through live clips". We'd like to fast-forward to the end of tomorrow's horse racing, please.

ANOTHER interesting paper title – for certain values of "interesting" – has been spotted by John Bullas. It is from the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, vol 104, p 367, and is called "Increasing the portion size of a sandwich increases energy intake". By happy coincidence, the first of the four authors cited is B. J. Rolls.

AND, talking of journal papers, thanks to Helen Simmons for drawing our attention to "Pathology in the Hundred Acre Wood: a neurodevelopmental perspective on A. A. Milne" (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*, vol 163, p 1557). The first paragraph gives a flavour of this study: "On the surface it is an innocent world: Christopher Robin, living in a beautiful forest surrounded by his loyal animal friends. Generations of readers of A. A. Milne's Winnie the Pooh stories have enjoyed these seemingly benign tales. However, perspectives change with time, and it is clear to our group of modern neurodevelopmentalists that these are in fact stories of Seriously Troubled Individuals, many of whom meet DSM-IV criteria for significant disorders. We have done an exhaustive review of the works of A. A. Milne and

offer our conclusions about the inhabitants of the Hundred Acre Wood in hopes that our observations will help the medical community understand that there is a Dark Underside to this world."

As we read on, we discover that Winnie the Pooh was suffering from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, inattentive subtype, and possibly obsessive compulsive disorder. Is nothing sacred?

PREGNANCY can be a time of serene expectation, but Jude Fry's was slightly overshadowed by worries about what her baby was going to look like. These emerged after reading *New Baby Book – a practical guide to the first three years* by Miriam Stoppard, which told her: "The genitals of both boys and girls are naturally larger at birth than the rest of their bodies."

Since her daughter was born – happily no so endowed – Fry has relaxed enough to contemplate that perhaps the word "proportionately" was missing there.

FINALLY, Mike Westwind recently bought a fixed exercise bike inappropriately named Explorer. Then he remembered the Impact driving school. Have other readers



come across unsuitable names like these for things they have bought or seen? If they have, Feedback would like to hear about them. And we'll need an unsuitable name for the names themselves. "Antinymy" comes to mind.

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